

# Are Christians Biased In Their Reasoning?



## The Objectivity of Science

How many times have you been told that, as a Christian, you were way too opinionated and biased? How many times have people discounted what you have offered because they believed that you were offering it from a position of 'opinion' rather than 'objective truth'? The world around us would like to segregate all truths into two separate boxes:

### **Objective Facts That Can Be Verified By Science**

*These are the truths that everyone agrees on. They are public properties and are highly verifiable. Math facts, the laws of nature, and issues that can be confirmed empirically typically fall into this category. Science is king here; people are willing to accept many things as objectively 'true' if they can be confirmed by 'science', which is seen as an unbiased objective barometer of truth*

### **Personal Beliefs That Are Held By Individuals**

*These are the privately held opinions of individuals that may be 'true for you' but not necessarily 'true for me'. In the simplest sense, personal preferences are located here (like your favorite ice cream flavor). But religious truth has also been relegated into this box by our culture. Like other personal preferences, the culture sees no need for empirical or objective verification of these kinds of beliefs, in fact, most people would resist any attempt you or I might make to try to argue that our religious beliefs are 'objectively true'. They are simply personal preferences held by individuals with a bias toward their own personal taste.*

If the secular world is correct about the segregated nature of truth, then you and I should STOP trying to convince people of spiritual truth claims. After all, according to this view of truth, our religious views are biased personal opinions. According to this view, science is the only objective path to truth.



## All Science Is Not the Same

But when you take a close look at what science can do (and can't do) you just may come to a different conclusion about the objective ability that science has to look at life's biggest questions: "How did we get here?" and "Where did we come from?" Let's begin by examining the nature of science. All of us have taken science in school, so we are familiar with some of the basic ideas, but I'll bet you've never really thought much about how science is used in an effort to answer the first of these two questions; determining our origin. So let's begin by reviewing how we might use science to search for truth.

The first form of science that you may be familiar with is what is known as 'empirical' science. The word, "empiric" is derived from a Greek word that means 'experience', so for the most part, empirical data is data that comes from things we can SEE and EXPERIENCE. Empirical science, therefore, is that study of the world around us that utilizes data that has been retrieved empirically (we observed it or experienced it first hand)! That's why scientists will often run experiments to SEE what happens in a given situation. They are simply trying to gather empirical data. Without it, they cannot come to a conclusion about any truth. Now think

about that for a minute. Let's say I'm trying to understand how the sun rises and sets each day. That's not much of a problem for the empirical scientist because the sun does this everyday! I can make daily observations and even begin to make predictions about what might happen tomorrow. I can then use my daily observations to assess my predictions. See, empirical science is really good at evaluating events, just so long as they are REPEATABLE and can be SEEN. That makes sense, because empirical science requires an observation in the first place, doesn't it? If something can't be seen, I cannot begin to collect data!



### **What If I Can't See It?**

But how can we use science to examine an event that cannot be seen? What if the event happened only once, and now it cannot be repeated with some kind of staged experiment that will allow us to see it again? That's really not an unusual problem. It happens everyday all across America! Everyday, homicide detectives have to try their best to solve crimes that occurred only once (every homicide is unique) and they cannot commit additional homicides just so they can SEE what happens! These investigators use science to catch the criminal, but it's not empirical science. They use another kind of science known as "forensic" science! Forensic science is used when you have an event that simply cannot be repeated because they are single unique events that occurred sometime in the past and will not re-occur in that exact form in the future.

Now if you've ever watched an episode of CSI, you know how forensic scientists work. They look for clues. While they cannot see the event re-occur anymore, they CAN see evidence that was left behind after the event occurred. Criminalists are familiar with this sort of evidence collection. They collect and examine shoe prints, fingerprints, and ballistic evidence, but it doesn't stop there. Forensic criminalists collect evidence in an effort to begin COMPARISONS! That's what they do. They make fingerprint comparisons, DNA and blood comparisons, trace evidence (i.e. fiber, soil, paint and hair) comparisons, ballistic comparisons, impression comparisons, document comparisons, and chemical (i.e. toxicological) comparisons! That's a lot of comparisons! But that is the nature of forensic science. It examines the leftover evidence of any particular event, and compares this evidence to what we know from other events that can be repeated.



### **What Kind of Science Should I Use?**

Since homicides are unique and cannot be repeated in exactly the same way they first occurred, criminalists use 'forensic' science to get to the bottom of what happened. They look at the evidence that is left behind and begin their work of comparing this evidence to what they know to be true. Since homicides are single non-repeating events from the past (thankfully), they are perfect candidates for the forensic sciences. But think about it for a minute. If we begin to study how you and I got here on planet Earth, we are, in essence, going to study a single non-repeatable event. We are going to be entering into an examination of something that cannot be repeated in the laboratory, based on the magnitude and complexity of the event itself. There is simply no way we can create a laboratory environment that will allow us to figure out how inanimate non-living materials somehow came to life and then became the diverse ecosystem we now see all around us. It's not just a matter of going from nothing to SOMETHING, it's a matter of going from nothing to EVERYTHING! We're just not going to be able to study that in the laboratory. It is a study that has to be conducted 'forensically' since we cannot SEE firsthand what occurred. So, for now,

let's remember that the kind of science we are going to need to study our origins is 'forensic' in nature!

But here is the problem with forensic science: the collection of forensic evidence helps us to build a good circumstantial case about what might have happened, but because we don't have the ability to repeat the activity in the form of an empirical experiment, All we can do is simply try our best to draw conclusions from this evidence. In the end, forensic science requires us to 'reason' through the case before us. We cannot conduct experiments in a public way to reenact the event. Instead, we will have to use our private mental faculties to come to the best conclusion we can. Do you see the problem here? Two people might look at the same set of evidences and come to two different conclusions based on their life experience and presuppositions!



### Are We Too Biased?

And, of course, non-believers will claim that theists are already predisposed (biased) toward a theistic conclusion before they even look at the evidence! They will tell us that because we already believe that there IS a God, we are too biased to examine the evidence fairly. Well, let's be clear about something. As a believing Christian, I certainly have a point of view, no doubt about it. But is it possible for me to examine a particular set of evidences fairly? Of course it is! Don't be fooled into thinking that you, as a Christian, are the only person with a point of view. Each and every one of us has a point of view from which we look and examine the world. Yet each of us has the capacity to judge the evidence fairly if our point of view does not ELIMINATE certain forms of evidence from consideration before we even begin. After all, juries are formed everyday in our legal system. People who hold a variety of viewpoints are assembled to make life and death decisions in court cases because the attorneys and judges are convinced that in spite of their views, they will be able to judge the evidence fairly. And that is exactly what happens everyday in courtrooms across America. Bias has nothing to do with holding a point of view. Bias occurs when your viewpoint eliminates certain forms of evidence and evidential conclusions before you even begin the investigation. And while atheists may argue that we, as Christians, have this kind of bias, a quick examination of the nature of secular science will reveal that just the opposite is true.



### Science Versus "Scientism"

In order to see how this is true, and understand the underlying philosophical bias of secular science, let's begin by looking at the definition of science. It's important for us to understand that 'science' involves both a methodology AND a philosophy. It's also important to understand that the methodology and philosophy of science are inseparably intertwined!

#### ***The Scientific METHOD***

*Most of us have spent enough time in science classes to understand the scientific method. This is that familiar process of making observations about the world around us, forming a hypothesis about how something might be working, then creating an experiment that attempts to verify or falsify our hypothesis. As Christians, we certainly have no problem with this aspect of science, and the history of science has been replete with Christian men and women who have examined their worlds with this same methodology!*

### ***The Scientific PHILOSOPHY***

*But secular science has also embraced a philosophy. This philosophy has come to be known as “naturalistic materialism” or “philosophical naturalism”. This view claims, in advance of any study of the evidence, that that everything, including origins, can be explained in terms of natural processes. This is a philosophy that PRECLUDES any examination of the evidence. It is the idea that the supernatural CANNOT exist, therefore, we cannot allow evidence to point us to supernatural factors or causes. Secular scientists would argue that in all our studies we must remember that some naturally explainable cause is at work in the process, and we simply cannot allow ourselves to explain any phenomena by means of a supernatural cause.*

Now, objectivism requires that we keep an open, unbiased mind as we examine any form of evidence, and as Christians, we must retain our open mindedness when examining physical evidence related to our origins. When natural forces can account for something, we must simply conclude that natural forces have caused it. But what about when the evidence points to a natural impossibility? What does objectivism require? It requires that we allow ourselves to consider ALL the possibilities and not limit ourselves to a single particular set of conclusions before we even begin. To do that is to truly be biased. So Who is truly biased here:

### ***Philosophical Naturalists***

*As Atheists who deny the supernatural, they cannot allow for ANY “un-natural”, “extra-natural” or “supernatural” explanation, even if the evidence may reasonably point in this direction*

### ***Christians***

*As Christians who believe in the possibility of the supernatural, we allow ourselves to consider both the natural and the supernatural conclusions. We are open to either possibility. We have not eliminated one set of possible conclusions in advance of the examination of the evidence, because to do that would be biased*



### **Uncomfortable Partners**

The scientific METHOD and the scientific PHILOSOPHY are not always best of friends, and the secular bias can sometimes create a problem for scientists who claim they are trying to find the truth. Let me try to illustrate this for you! Imagine a pair of detective partners who are assigned to the homicide detail of your local police agency. Let me introduce you to Phil and Ted, your local homicide investigators. Ted is a young officer, newly assigned to the detail. He's just come out of a four week investigator's course and he's chomping at the bit, ready to investigate his first homicide! He's excited and he can't wait to implement all the crime scene investigation methodology that he has just learned! But Phil is no rookie, he's been in this detail for years and years. He's a veteran and boy is he well respected. He's investigated many homicides and he's already got a set of opinions about people and evidence. While Ted may be eager to utilize his newly learned methodology, Phil is very comfortable relying on his intuitive senses and a PHILOSOPHY that he has developed over the years!

Now follow Phil and Ted as they are dispatched to their first homicide scene together! They are cruising down the road when they get the call of a homicide that has been discovered in a local suburb of their town. A woman has been killed in her home. They quickly drive to the location and discover that CSI officers have already cordoned off the area. In fact, as they approach the residence, they can see that the front door is ajar and that the coroner investigators are already at the scene as well. The victim's body has already been taken to the coroner's office. Ted is ready to get to work! He quickly examines the crime scene for evidence, and observes that there are obvious signs of a struggle. Tables and chairs have been turned over and there is a murder weapon lying on the floor next to blood evidence. While Ted is examining all of this, Phil is looking intently at a picture of the victim and her family that is sitting on the fireplace mantel.

Well, Ted's ready to start. He's ready to start collecting evidence and utilizing forensic sciences to try to figure out who did this. After all, there is blood and weapon evidence (a knife) near the body, and there is also evidence in the kitchen near other knives located on the counter. Perhaps there will be some fingerprint evidence. Ted tells Phil that he will start to employ some of the methodology that he learned in his investigator's course! Phil speaks up at this point. "Listen young man, I've been around for many years and I was investigating homicides when you were still in grade school. I've investigated dozens of homicides just like this one, and they always turn out the same. In the end, it's always a family member or someone who is living in the same house who ends up being the murderer. So you follow that evidence trail all you want, but remember: a family member did this!" Phil definitely has a philosophy about the murderer and he is flat out unwilling to bend on this issue.

Ted offers his humble objection! "But Phil, what if the evidence leads us outside the home altogether? What if there are fingerprints or some other forensic evidences that reveal a suspect who isn't a family member or someone who lives with the victim?" Ted is doing his best to remain objective and true to the methodology. He simply wants to follow the evidence wherever it may lead, and not start off with limits!

Phil will hear none of it! "Look Ted, I've already told you, I've worked dozens of these kinds of murders. I'm not some rookie, and I'm not a fool. You, my friend, are the inexperienced rookie. If you discover evidence that someone other than a family member or person living here with the victim did this crime, you can just disregard that evidence. You simply must be interpreting it wrong! I know what I'm talking about here. You can trust my philosophy on this!" Phil will not be moved. He has already made a decision in advance of the evidence and he is confident that he is right. Sounds kind of crazy doesn't it? How can you say you are trying to uncover the true suspect here when you are already excluding and dismissing so many potential suspects before you even begin? It certainly sounds like Phil is simply trying to prove something he already believes and has allowed his beliefs to influence his investigation! But that is exactly what he is about to do, and poor Ted doesn't stand a chance. Phil's philosophy is always going to trump Ted's methodology.

You simply cannot go into an investigation with a philosophy that dictates the outcome. It's crazy to call such an investigation 'objective'. Yet that's what happens everyday in secular science circles. There is a pre-existing philosophy of "naturalistic materialism" that does not allow for even the POSSIBILITY of anything supernatural. Science like this begins with a bias, and this bias restricts the outcome entirely. And then, to add insult to injury, the secular world actually has the audacity to tell us that we, as Christians, are the ones who are biased!



Just the opposite is true. We are committed to following the evidence. If it leads to a naturalistic conclusion, great; but we are not philosophically biased against supernatural explanations should the evidence lead us there.



### **The Path Toward Truth May Not Take Us All the Way**

The search for truth involves a journey. You and I are on a path that will hopefully lead us to the truth about our origins and the truth about the world around us. But sometimes as Christians we think that our lives of faith require us to simply trust blindly. It's as though we think we are called by God to walk down this path with our head down, ignoring the evidence altogether. It's as if we think that relying on evidence somehow minimizes the power of our FAITH. As a matter of fact, I've heard many Christians claim that this is the only TRUE form of faith, a faith that needs no evidential support; a faith that walks blindly, trusting without any examination of the world around us. But I want to encourage you to embrace the journey of faith completely by taking the time to stop and look at the evidences without bias. The journey of faith is not a walk that does it's best to IGNORE the evidence, but it is a walk that does it's best to FOLLOW the evidence. Take the time to stop and look at the world around you, it just may point you to the creator of the universe.

Now, it would sure be nice if the path toward truth was an easy one, filled with simple road signs that would point us directly to the truth, wouldn't it? But no investigation of truth is really all that easy, just ask Phil and Ted! It's going to require a little work on your part to determine what the evidences are, where they may be found and what they really mean. Remember that few journeys have real meaning when they require nothing of us. It's the journeys that required us to work and sacrifice that have true meaning in our lives, even years later. This journey will be no different. And there are evidences all around us that will give us forensic clues to our origins. We simply need to look for them. Just like any path traveler, we can follow the evidence and find our way. If nothing else, we may certainly be able to see if anyone has been here before us.

In the end, the evidence will lead us just so far, and may not bring us all the way to our destination. I'm not here to tell you that we can prove God's existence to the satisfaction of everyone we may talk to. If that were the case there would be no atheists in our world! The evidence around us will lead us on the path to our conclusion, but in the end, whether you believe in God or you believe that evolution can account for how we got here, you are going to have to recognize that the evidence WILL NOT BRING YOU ALL THE WAY HOME. As Christians we need to understand that the evidence WILL point us somewhere. It will point us in a very powerful way; but there will still be a faith component that will be required to believe in God, and that's exactly the way that God wants it. But the very same thing can be said for the philosophical naturalist (more on that [HERE](#)).



### **How God Feels About the Journey**

Some of you who have been Christians for a while may be wondering if this search offends God in some way, and I think that is a fair question to ask. Does our search for truth mean that we really have doubts, and does the presence of doubt offend God? Did God tell us anything in advance about the presence of evidence in the world around us? Let's begin by taking a look at what God says through Paul in his letter to Roman believers:



### **Romans 1:18-20**

*The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

God wants us to know that there is no contradiction between what we see in nature (or what we discover in science) and what is revealed about him in the scriptures. God is not afraid or intimidated by our search. He's not trying to keep us from seeing what's out there in the world around us. In fact, He wants you to take a look because He knows that His invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - are clearly seen in everything He has made. God is not upset with you, just because you have doubts that you want to reconcile. He encourages you to discover who he is through the world He has created.

And God understands our inherent nature as doubters and skeptics. He has consistently provided us with proof that will at least point us to Him and to the truth of our origins. Our God is a God of reason and evidence. Jesus himself provided evidence to support his claims of deity. Let's read and listen to Jesus' words from the Gospel of John:



### **John 14:11**

*Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.*

God wants us to examine the evidence because he knows that all the evidence will eventually lead us to the supernatural. The God of scripture tells us that the world around us is evidence of his existence, and that He is willing to provide us with evidence of the miraculous as well. He knows that this evidence will eventually lead us through all the sciences to the source of all creation. God wants us to ask the tough questions and go looking for the best answers.